



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember, Ward 3
Chair, Committee on Transportation and the Environment

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Office: (202) 724-8062

Fax: (202) 724-8118

mcheh@dccouncil.us

www.marycheh.com

Councilmember Marion Barry
Chairperson, Committee on Workforce and Community Affairs
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie
Chairperson, Committee on Government Operations
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmembers Barry and McDuffie,

In 2003, after years of neglect, one of the walls of the Wilson Pool collapsed, which caused the pool to be closed permanently. Five years later, the District spent \$35 million to rebuild the pool. When the new Wilson Aquatic Center reopened in 2009, it was beautiful, state-of-the-art facility – the finest public pool in the region.

Yet, I fear that we are once again on the same path that led to the demise of the old Wilson pool. Since the facility reopened, the District has had lots of trouble operating and maintaining it. A few months after the pool reopened, large white markings appeared on the building's exterior that had to be removed. The pool has had recurring problems with water pressure, causing showers to be inoperable. Last year, the pool was regularly closed because the pool was under-staffed. It was also closed because a pump failed. Parts of the facility have been closed in the past after the pool's chemicals were mixed improperly. Earlier this month, the pool was closed for more than a week because the air-conditioning system failed. Additionally, the pool has experienced a spate of thefts, apparently by persons who enter the pool with bolt cutters that they use to open lockers.

Individually, these incidents may not be a cause for major concern. However, when considered together, I believe that these problems raise serious questions about the operations and maintenance of the Wilson Aquatic Center. Since your committees oversee the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of General Services, I am writing to ask that you hold a hearing on this facility shortly after the Council returns from its summer recess. I fear that if the Council sits idly by while these problems continue, the District's multi-million dollar investment will be wasted.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Cheh
Councilmember, Ward 3